

Application No.: 09/876432

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Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A method of collecting information related to RFID tags associated with items of interest, comprising the steps of:

- (a) selecting a category of items using a user interface associated with an RFID reader;
- (b) using the RFID reader to interrogate at least one RFID tag associated with an item of interest to obtain information associated with the item of interest, wherein the item of interest is not currently associated with the category selected in step (a); and
- (c) thereafter associating information related to the at least one item obtained in step (b) with the category selected in step (a).

2. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the method further includes the step of:

- (d) saving the categorized information obtained in step (c) in a database.

3. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein step (a) comprises selecting a category from among a list of categories displayed on the user interface.

4. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein step (a) comprising selecting a category and designating the attributes of items in that category to define the category.

5. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the category describes a location where an item was interrogated.

6. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein the category describes a class of items.

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7. (Original) The method of claim 2, wherein categories from which a user may select are uploaded from a data storage device and displayed on the user interface.

8. (Previously Presented) A method of interrogating RFID tags associated with items of interest, comprising the steps of:

(a) selecting at least two categories of items using a user interface associated with an RFID reader;

(b) using the RFID reader to interrogate at least one RFID tag associated with an item of interest to obtain information associated with the item of interest, wherein the item of interest is not currently associated with the categories selected in step (a); and

(c) thereafter categorizing information related to the at least one item(s) associated with the interrogated RFID tag(s) obtained in step (b) with at least one of the categories selected in step (a).

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 8, wherein the method further includes the step of:

(d) saving the categorized information obtained in step (c) in a database.

10. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the categories are mutually exclusive.

11. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the categories are not mutually exclusive.

12. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein one category describes whether an item is present in a storage area.

13. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein the categories describe different types of items.

14. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein information necessary to categorize each RFID-tagged item may be obtained from the RFID tag itself.

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15. (Original) The method of claim 9, wherein information necessary to categorize each RFID-tagged item may be obtained from a database stored in memory of the RFID reader.

16. (Original) The method of claim 15, wherein the database is stored on a removable data storage device.

17. (Original) The method of claim 16, wherein the removable data storage device is a flash memory card.

18. (Previously Presented) A method of interrogating RFID tags associated with items of interest, comprising the steps of:

- (a) selecting at least one category of items using a user interface associated with an RFID reader;
- (b) interrogating RFID tags associated with items, at least one of which is within the category of items;
- (c) categorizing information related to at least one item(s) associated with the interrogated RFID tag(s) in at least one of the categories; and
- (d) ignoring any RFID-tagged-item that may not be categorized in at least one category.

19. (Original) The method of claim 18, wherein the method further includes the step of:

- (e) saving the categorized information in a database.

20. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein at least one category describes items of a certain type.

21. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein information necessary to categorize each RFID-tagged item may be obtained from the RFID tag itself.

22. (Original) The method of claim 19, wherein information necessary to categorize each RFID-tagged item may be obtained from a database stored in memory of the RFID reader.

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23. (Original) The method of claim 22, wherein the database is stored on a removable data storage device.

24. (Original) The method of claim 23, wherein the removable data storage device is a flash memory card.

25. (Previously Presented) A method of identifying items associated with RFID tags, comprising the steps of:

- (a) providing a database including entries associated with certain items;
- (b) interrogating RFID tags associated with items with an RFID reader; and
- (c) providing an indication to a user when the RFID reader interrogates an RFID tag associated with an item that does not match an entry on the database.

26. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein the indication comprises illuminating a light source.

27. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein the indication comprises providing an audible signal.

28. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein the indication is provided on a display.

29. (Original) The method of claim 28, wherein the display is a component of a user interface associated with a portable RFID reader.

30. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29, wherein the user interface enables a user to create a database record for the item that does not match an entry on the database.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 29, wherein the user interface enables a user to enter information into the RFID reader related to the item that does not match an entry on the database.

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32-37. (Cancelled)

38. (Previously Presented) A method of obtaining information related to items of interest associated with RFID tags, comprising the steps of:

- (a) interrogating RFID tags, each associated with an item, to obtain information related to the items for a purpose other than determining the presence or absence of the items in a storage area; and
- (b) simultaneously using the information obtained in step (a) for determining the presence or absence of the items in the storage area.

39. (Previously Presented) A method of obtaining information related to items of interest associated with RFID tags, comprising the steps of:

- (a) interrogating RFID tags, each associated with an item, to obtain information for a first purpose of determining whether the items are in a predetermined order within a storage area; and
- (b) simultaneously using information obtained in step (a) for a second purpose of determining the presence or absence of the items in the storage area.

40. (Previously Presented) A method of obtaining information related to items of interest associated with RFID tags, comprising the steps of:

- (a) interrogating RFID tags, each associated with an item, to determine information related to the items for a first purpose of searching for certain items on a predetermined search list; and
- (b) simultaneously using the information obtained in step (a) for a second purpose of determining the presence or absence of the items in the storage area.

41. (Previously Presented) A method of obtaining information related to items of interest associated with RFID tags, comprising the steps of:

- (a) interrogating RFID tags, each associated with an item, to determine information related to the items for a first purpose of checking items into or out of a storage area; and

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(b) simultaneously using the information obtained in step (a) for a second purpose of determining the presence or absence of the items in the storage area.

42. (Previously Presented) A method of reconciling an inventory list of items associated with RFID tags, comprising the steps of:

- (a) using an RFID reader to interrogate at least one RFID tag associated with an item;
- (b) determining whether the item is represented on the inventory list as being present, and if not;
- (c) indicating to a user in real time that the inventory list indicates that the item is absent; and
- (d) enabling the user to correct the inventory list in real time by confirming that the item is present using a user interface associated with the RFID reader.

43. (Original) The method of claim 42, wherein the user interface comprises a display.

44. (Original) The method of claim 43, wherein the display is a touch panel display.

45. (Previously Presented) A method of reconciling an inventory list of items associated with RFID tags, comprising the steps of:

- (a) using an RFID reader to interrogate RFID tags each associated with an item;
- (b) determining whether an item represented on the inventory list as being present is among the items whose RFID tags were interrogated, and if not;
- (c) indicating to a user in real time that the inventory list indicates that the item is present; and
- (d) enabling the user to correct the inventory list in real time by confirming that the item is absent using a user interface associated with the RFID reader.

46. (Original) The method of claim 45, wherein the user interface comprises a display.

47. (Original) The method of claim 46, wherein the user interface comprises a touch panel display.

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48. (Previously Presented) A method of organizing collected data related to items associated with RFID tags, comprising the steps of:

- (a) using an RFID reader to interrogate RFID tags, each associated with an item, wherein the items are not arranged or interrogated in an order associated with their desired locations in a storage area;
- (b) organizing information obtained from the RFID tags in an order associated with the desired locations of the items in a storage area; and
- (c) providing the organized information from step (b) to a user.

49. (Original) The method of claim 48, wherein step (c) comprises providing information to the user on a display.

50-74. (Cancelled)

75. (Previously Presented) A method of collecting information related to RFID tags associated with items of interest, comprising the steps of:

- (a) selecting a category of items using a user interface associated with an RFID reader, wherein a category is a group of items that possess specified attributes and represents a portion of an entire group of items having associated RFID tags;
- (b) using the RFID reader to interrogate at least one RFID tag associated with an item of interest to obtain information associated with the item of interest, wherein the item of interest is not currently associated with the category selected in step (a);
- (c) thereafter associating information related to the at least one item obtained in step (b) with the category selected in step (a); and
- (d) saving the categorized information obtained in step (c) in a database.

76. (New) A method of using information related to RFID tags associated with items of interest, comprising the steps of:

- (a) selecting a category of items using a user interface associated with a computer;
- (b) obtaining a list of at least one RFID-tagged item; and

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(c) associating information related to the at least one item with the selected category.

77. (New) The method of claim 76, wherein the method further includes the step of:

(d) saving the categorized information in a database.

78. (New) The method of claim 77, wherein step (a) comprises selecting a category from among a list of categories displayed on the user interface.

79. (New) The method of claim 77, wherein step (a) comprising selecting a category and designating the attributes of items in that category to define the category.

80. (New) The method of claim 77, wherein the category describes a location where an item was interrogated.

81. (New) The method of claim 77, wherein the category describes a class of items.

82. (New) The method of claim 77, wherein categories from which a user may select are uploaded from a data storage device and displayed on the user interface.

83. (New) A method of interrogating RFID tags associated with items of interest, comprising the steps of:

(a) selecting at least two categories of items using a user interface associated with a computer;

(b) obtaining a list of at least one RFID-tagged item; and

(c) categorizing information related to the at least one item(s) associated with the interrogated RFID tag(s) in at least one of the categories.

84. (New) The method of claim 83, wherein the method further includes the step of:

(d) saving the categorized information in a database.

85. (New) The method of claim 84, wherein the categories are mutually exclusive.

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86. (New) The method of claim 84, wherein the categories are not mutually exclusive.

87. (New) The method of claim 84, wherein one category describes whether an item is present in a storage area.

88. (New) The method of claim 84, wherein the categories describe different types of items.

89. (New) The method of claim 84, wherein information necessary to categorize each RFID-tagged item may be obtained from a database stored in memory of the RFID reader.

90. (New) The method of claim 89, wherein the database is stored on a removable data storage device.

91. (New) A method of interrogating RFID tags associated with items of interest, comprising the steps of:

(a) selecting at least one category of items using a user interface associated with an RFID reader;

(b) interrogating RFID tags associated with items, at least one of which is within the category of items;

(c) categorizing information related to the at least one item(s) associated with the interrogated RFID tag(s) in at least one of the categories; and

(d) ignoring any RFID-tagged-item that may not be categorized in at least one category.

92. (New) The method of claim 91, wherein the method further includes the step of:

(e) saving the categorized information in a database.

93. (New) The method of claim 92, wherein at least one category describes items of a certain type.

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94. (New) The method of claim 92, wherein the database is stored on a removable data storage device.

95. (New) A method of using information related to items associated with RFID tags, comprising the steps of:

- (a) obtaining a list of information related to the RFID tags, the list organized in the order in which the RFID tags were interrogated by an RFID reader; and
- (b) organizing the information in an order other than the order in which the tags were interrogated by the RFID reader.

96. (New) The method of claim 95, wherein only information related to RFID-tagged items that are out of position by at least a predetermined amount is organized in the order.

97. (New) The method of claim 95, wherein the method further includes the step of:

- (c) comparing the organized information from step (b) with a predetermined ordered list.

98. (New) The method of claim 97, wherein the predetermined ordered list is a list of items in an expected order of location in a storage area.

99. (New) The method of claim 97, wherein the method further comprises the step of:

- (d) creating a list of items that are on the predetermined ordered list but not among the ordered list from step (b).

100. (New) The method of claim 97, wherein the method further comprises the step of:

- (d) creating a list of items that are on the ordered list from step (b) but not among the predetermined ordered list.

101. (New) The method of claim 97, wherein both the ordered list of step (b) and the predetermined ordered list are provided to a computer by a portable RFID reader.

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102. (New) The method of claim 97, wherein both the ordered list of step (b) and the predetermined ordered list are stored on a removable data storage device by a portable RFID reader, and uploaded from the removable data storage device to a computer.